

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents several points discussing the main problem of the research. This chapter is arranged into background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the purposes of the research, the significance of the research, and the outline of the research.

Background of the Research

Assessment is a crucial part of any education process. According to Ghaicha (2016), assessment is a part of educational process where the teachers make a judgement regarding the students' achievement according to the students' performance by collecting, measuring, analysing, synthesizing, and interpreting information. Assessment is also an important part in the teaching and learning activity, and assessment cannot be separated from it. According to Wakeford (2003), assessment is a fundamental element of the teaching and learning system. Similarly, Jones (2005) stated that assessment is an important process to support students' learning achievement. Brookhart (2004) argued that assessment is a process of gaining information about certain something that are used for some objectives. Brookhart added that assessment has a broader scope than measurement, a process to attain quantitative and qualitative data which can be useful as information.

The teachers can choose to assess the students' knowledge and students' soft skills. Alzaid (2017) explained that assessment does not only provide a way for the students to know their ability by the test given by the teachers, but it also focuses on the students' abilities such as problem solving, communication, critical thinking, teamwork, and the ability to respect others. To assess English language

learners' knowledge, the teachers can use different ways depending on the learning process's goal. Hus and Matjašič (2017) stated that teachers can use verbal and written answers, oral presentations, artistic, technical, practical and other assignments, or project work to assess the students' knowledge. However, assessment is not only a process to obtain English language learners' information. Assessment can also serve as a feedback for the students. According to Norton (2009), assessment as feedback focuses more on practices to increase students' learning.

A good language assessment should have some characteristics or principles to ensure that it is appropriate to be administered to the learners. According to Harmer (2007), assessment is considered effective if it has two characteristics; validity and reliability. Harmer added that assessment is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. For example, if teachers want to assess their students' speaking ability, teachers should ask students to perform an oral test to measure their speaking ability, not a paper-best test. The other characteristic is reliability. Harmer also argued that assessment is reliable if the assessment gives a consistent result. For example, if one group took a certain assessment and they took another similar assessment, the results of those assessments should be the same.

In addition, Brown (2003) stated that language assessment should have five characteristics. They are practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity, and washback. The first characteristic is that assessment should be practical, which means that it is easy to use; it is not expensive; and it is easy to administer. The second characteristic is reliability. This means that the grades of a candidate in the first assessment should not be too different from the grades of the second

assessment. The third characteristic is validity. This validity checks if the assessment is assessing what it is supposed to assess. Validity is divided into some parts such as content validity, construct validity, concurrent validity, predictive validity, and face validity. The fourth characteristic is authenticity. It means that the assessment should use real words such as using a natural language in the assessment; the topic of the assessment should be meaningful for the learners; and the items of the assessment are more contextualized. There is a thematic organization provided in the assessment, and there is the use of real-word tasks. The last characteristic is washback. Washback refers to the effect of the assessment to the teaching and learning process.

Assessment can take many forms. According to Braun and Kanjee (2006), test designers can use any combination of item types, including multiple choice items, learner constructed response items (solving problems, providing short answers, writing essays), and extended work samples or portfolios. According to Harmer (2007), types of test items are divided into direct and indirect test items. Direct item involves the learners being asked to perform their communicative skill. Meanwhile, indirect assessment measures the learners' knowledge and ability including receptive and productive skills. The examples of indirect test items are multiple-choice questions (MCQs), close procedures, transformation and paraphrasing, and sentence re-ordering.

Nowadays, MCQs are a familiar sight in education world. Teachers often use MCQs in their students' assessment. Mavis, Cole, Hoppe, and McDougall as cited in DiBattista and Kurzawa (2011) found that MCQ items are commonly used on tests in colleges, and they become an important part of a student's grade. MCQs can be used effectively to assess students' knowledge. DiBattista and

Kurzawa (2011) stated that MCQs consist of a question, and MCQs refer to the stem and two or more possible answers related to the question. MCQs can have at least two options of answers, and most MCQs have four choices of possible answers.

Based on the researcher's observation, MCQs is one of the most widely used assessment types in one private high-school in Yogyakarta. MCQs are written form of assessment which the students are asked to select one correct answer from several options which are presented. The teachers used MCQs as one of assessment tools to assess the the students' knowledge. In every assessment, MCQs were used by teachers in one private high-school in Yogyakarta. The teachers used MCQs in the daily test, mid-term, and final examinations. In these assessments, the teachers also used other written examination types including short answer questions or essays for assessing the cognitive ability of students, but MCQs made up most of the questions. MCQs are used the teachers in one private high-school in Yogyakarta as one of the ways to measure the students' achievement in mastering the materials had been taught so that the teachers knew the student's weakness. Designing good MCQs that are appropriate to assess the students' knowledge is difficult for teachers in one private high-school in Yogyakarta, because they need knowledge, skill, and also accuracy to design MCQs.

In designing good MCQs, the teachers used the guidelines in the guidebook provided by the government. Besides using guidelines provided by the government, the teachers also used their own guidelines. The teachers in one private high-school in Yogyakarta had different guidelines to construct MCQs items. In applying their guidelines, they might across many challenges in

designing MCQs. For this reason, the researcher was interested in investigating the teachers' challenges on the use of MCQs on the English assessment in one private high-school in Yogyakarta.

The Statement of the Problem

Based on the researcher's observation, MCQs are type of assessment format used to assess the students' knowledge. In one private high-school in Yogyakarta, the English teachers used MCQs in their English assessment. The teachers used MCQs in the daily test, mid-term, and final examinations. For this reason, the English teachers should pay attention to the assessment items that they make. They have to make sure that their assessment items are suitable for their learners. Furthermore, this is important for the teachers in order to design proper MCQs items. It means that MCQs can be used to measure the students' competency in English course. In good MCQs, every item must evaluate the student's understanding of a specific learning objective. It means that the items that do not contribute to measure the students' achievement of a specific learning objective are removed. In designing proper or good MCQs, every teacher in one private high-school in Yogyakarta has different guidelines. This guidelines help them to design good MCQs.

However, based on the researcher's observation, the teachers face some challenges in applying their own guidelines in designing good MCQs for English assessments. One of the teacher's challenges is if there is no guidance in applying their guidelines. It means that the teachers in one private high-school in Yogyakarta use their guidelines, they still need guidance to design good MCQs maximally. For this reason, the researcher conducted the study about the teachers'

guidelines and challenges on the use of MCQs on the English assessment in one private high-school in Yogyakarta.

The Research Questions

There are two research questions in this research:

1. What are the teachers' guidelines in designing MCQs for the English assessment in one private high-school in Yogyakarta?
2. What are the teachers' challenges in following their guidelines of designing MCQs for the English assessment in one private high-school in Yogyakarta?

The Purposes of the Research

Based on the research questions, the purposes of this research are framed as follows:

1. To investigate teachers' guidelines in designing MCQs for the English assessment in one private high-school in Yogyakarta.
2. To explore teachers' challenges in following their guideline of designing MCQs for the English assessment in one private high-school in Yogyakarta.

The Significance of the Research

In order to be a constructive study, this study provides some significance. This study is expected to give benefits for the researcher, teachers, pre-service teachers, and other researchers. The significances of the study are explained as follows:

For the researcher. This study aims to help the researcher as a prospective teacher to know several guidelines and challenges in designing MCQs. This research can enrich the researcher's knowledge.

For the teachers. The researcher hopes that this study provides knowledge for teachers regarding the challenges and guideline in designing good MCQs for students by considering the guideline or the rules of designing MCQs. By knowing the challenges in designing MCQs, teachers can have preparation to overcome the challenges in applying their guideline in designing MCQs.

For pre-service teachers. The researcher hopes to provide the knowledge for the students who are studying to become teachers regarding the guidelines and challenges in constructing MCQs that they might discover their own guideline to construct a good assessment for their students in the future.

For the other researchers. The researcher hopes to help other researchers to develop the knowledge about teachers' guidelines and challenges on the use of MCQs on the English assessment, and this study can be a reference for other researchers who wants to conduct a similar study.

The Outline of the Research

This research consists of five chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher delivers the background of the research. The researcher also presents the statement of the problem. Moreover, the researcher formulates the research questions and the purposes of the study. This chapter also provides several benefits, namely the significance of the study. In the chapter two, the researcher presents the literature review on the teachers' perception on using MCQs on English assessment. The third chapter focuses on the research methodology used in collecting the data which includes research design of the study, setting of the study, participants of the study, instrument of the study, technique of the data collection, and analysis of the data. The next chapter is about the findings of the

study. The last chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations for several parties.